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LIFE AND WRITINGS OF

SRI

MADHAVA SIVAGNANA SWAMIGAL,

Dravida Maha Bhashyakarar.

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Preface.

This short life sketch of Sri Madhava Sivagnana Swamigal, the author of the renowned *Dravida Maha Bhashyam* of the Saiva Siddhandha Philosophy has been prepared, from the Review of the late Mr. Venkatasami Mudaliar, B. A., (Tahsildar of Srivaikuntam) of Vellore and published at the request of **M. R. Ry., S. V. Nallaperumal Pillai Avergal.**, (Merchant, Mirasdar and Banker) the President of the Saiva Siddhandha Sabha, Tuticorin, with a view to distribute to the audience during the 133rd. Guru Puja Mahothsavam of our Swamigal to be celebrated at Vikramasingapuram, the birth place of the Swamigal, on the 30th. April 1917, under the auspices of **Srimath Vaithialinga Tambiran,** Dakshanam Karwar of Tiruvavaduthurai Mutt by the admirers and disciples of the Swamigal.

K. A. Sivagnanam Pillai,
Vakil, Ambasamudram and a descendant in the family of the Swamigal.

25th April 1917.

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LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

MADHAVA SIVAGNANA SWAMIGAL.

Sivagnana Yogi or Swamigal, a great scholar and sage who flourished in the middle of the 18th. century was born of a Saiva Vellala family noted for its wealth and learning in the village of Vikramasingapuram near Papavinasam in the Ambasamudram Taluk of the Tinnevelly District. His father was Anandakuttar and his mother 'the chaste Mailammai.' His parents named him Mukkalalinger. The village of Vikramasingapuram is situated near the Pothigai malai (Southern portion of the Western Ghats) which is believed to be the permanent abode of the great Tamil Saint Agastiyamunivar. Tradition goes that the family in which Mukkalalingar was born was under the special inspiration of St. Agastiyar. From his childhood Mukkalalingar was noted for his good behaviour and devotion. He was sent to school in his fifth year. It is said that on one day when he was returning home from school he met on the way a number of ascetic disciples of the Tiruvavaduthurai Mutt of Kailaya Paramparai who were then on a pilgrimage to important Siva Temples. The boy was struck by their holy appearance. He paid his respects to them and invited them to his house for meals. The ascetics were naturally moved by the boy's devotional disposition and agreed to go with him. They followed the boy to his house where they were welcomed, in the absence of the father, by the mother who was doubly glad at the unexpected visit of the Saiva Devotees and of her child's spirit. The guests were sumptuously fed and they departed after blessing the boy. The boy Mukkalalingar was very much pleased that his mother so earnestly co-operated in respect of the invitation

of the Saiva Devotees. His praise of his mother in the following oft-quoted stanza (venba) is indeed very touching.

அருந்ததியென்னம்மை யடியவர்கட் கென்றும்
திருந்த வமுதளிக்குஞ் செல்வி— பொருந்தவே
ஆனந்தக்கூத்தர் அகமகிழத் தொண்டு செயு
மானந் தவாத மயில்.

The father, who was all the while away, heard of the news on his return with immense pleasure.

The visit of the devotees and their parting blessings kindled in Mukkalalingar his latent desire- the fruit of his past births–to exert himself for the emancipation of his soul from the throes of birth and death. He expressed to his parents his desire to follow the ascetics on their pilgrimage and enter the Tiruvavaduthurai Mutt for education. They were naturally unwilling to part with the boy but found that he was of a more determined character than they thought of. He was at length allowed to depart amidst tears and blessings. The boy joined the party, worshipped many Siva Temples on the way and reached the Tiruvavaduthurai Mutt which has always been the seat of great learning and religious importance. His intelligence, devotion and youth attracted the attention of the (பின்) Velappa Desikar, who was then the Junior Guru (Head) of the Mutt and he took him as his true disciple. The Guru and the pupil loved each other and as was expected the pupil in the course of a short time acquired great proficiency in Tamil and mastered all he could learn from his renowned Teacher in Tamil Literature and Philosophy. He was duly initiated in the holy Saiva Agamas and Sastras by his Guru Velappa Desikar and soon received and deserved the name of Sivagnana Munivar and became an ascetic disciple of the Mutt. His Guru was the (பின்) Velappa Desikar is seen from what he says in his Kanji Puranam:– "* * * சிவயோகத்தழுத்தி நாயேன்,செய்வினையும் கைக்கொண்ட வேலப்ப தேசிகன் தாள் சென்னிசேர்ப்பாம்"

His earliest work was his commentary on the introduction to and on the 1st. Sutram of Tolkappyam-the greatest and

most ancient extant work on grammar and rhetoric in Tamil. It is called "தொல்காப்பிய சூத்திர விருத்தி." It is a critical review or discussion of some of the points of difference and errors according to him of three previous commentators:- (இளம்பூரணர், சேனவரையர் and நச்சினார்க்கினியர்). He also revised and corrected the Viruthi Urai of Nannul of Pavananthi Munivar, (a grammar of later date) by Sankara Namasivaya Pulavar. Thus he became the foremost Grammarian of his age and distinguished himself as a Logician, Thinker, Poet, Translator, Controversialist and most of all as a spotless Saiva Saint. His reputation spread far and wide in Southern India.

He left the Mutt for preaching and lecturing in and about Congeevaram and Madras. He secured as his friend, a Mudaliar Patron of Arts and Literature–a native of Thottikalai (a village near Madras). Sivagnana Swamigal expressed his desire to learn the Sanscrit language. The Mudaliar secured for him Sanscrit teachers from Tiruvottiyur and Conjeevaram. The manner in which he attained mastery over the language is said to have been extraordinary. It is said that he would simply sit hearing the discourse of the Brahmin scholars and the whole became impressed in his memory. Sivagnanaswamigal soon attained proficiency in Tarka (Logic) and Agama Sastras and in the religious works of the great Saiva Saints. He translated with marked ability the Tarka Sangraham and Annambhattiyam. These translations and his works on grammar are said to form guides in a way to his great work of Dravida Maha Bhashyam. He also translated Siddhanta Prakasika of Sarvatma Sambu Sivachariar, the first canto of Kanchi Puranam, the * 5 slokas of Haradatta Sivachariar, and the Siva Tatva Vivekam of Appaiya Dikshidar. His original poetical works are noted below:- (1) சோமேசர் முதுமொழி வெண்பா (2) திருவேகம்பர் அந்தாதி (3) திருமுல்லைவாயில் அந்தாதி (4) குளத்தூர்ப் பதிற்றுப் பத்தந்தாதி (5) கலைசைப் பதிற்றுப் பத்தாந்தாதி (6) இளசைப் பதிற்றுப்பத்தாந்தாதி (7) கச்சி ஆனந்தருத்திரேசர் பதிகம் (8) திருவேகம்பர் ஆனந்தக்களிப்பு (9) செங்கழுநீர்

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* *Vide last Page for the translation of 5 slokas.*

விநாயகர் பிள்ளைத்தமிழ் (10) அமுதாம்பிகை பிள்ளைத்தமிழ் (11) செப்பறைப்பதி அகிலாண்டேசுவரி பதிகம் (12) திருத்தொண்டர் திருநாமக் கோவை (13) பஞ்சாக்கர தேசிகர்மாலை.

His other works given below are also to be noted:- (1) கம்பராமாயண முதற் செய்யுள் சங்கோத்தரவிருத்தி (2) இலக்கண விளக்கச் சூறாவளி (3) 'எடுத்து' என்னும் சொல்லுக்கிட்ட வைரக்குப்பாயம் (4) சித்தியார் சிவசமவாதவுரை மறுப்பு.

Sivagnana Swamigal was a sage of unparalelled merits. His inner man is seen from the tradition which goes on to say that when once the Swamigal with 3 other Sanyasins were served with meals not properly cooked, they (except the Swamigal) were dissatisfied with the same and composed a verse consisting of 4 lines the last of which was completed by the Swamigal which runs as follows:-

> கொங்கன்வந்து பொங்கிய கொளியலரிசிச் சோற்றினைச்
> சங்கமங்கள் கூடிக்கொண்டு சாப்பிடத் தலைப்பட்டோம்
> அங்குமிங்கும் பார்க்கிறீர் அமுதின்மேற்கண்ணில்லையே
> எங்கள்பாவ மெங்கள்பாவ மெங்கள்பாவ மீசனே

The sage spent his whole life to the public welfare and spritual advancement of Southern India. He lived a life of spotless virtue. He seems to have communicated his thoughts to the world more by writing than by word of mouth.

The exact date of his birth is not known. His 'செங்கழுநீர் விநாயகர் பிள்ளைத்தமிழ்' was announced for approval before the literary men of the age in the year 1647 of Sakha Era (corresponding to 1724) will appear from the following stanza:—

> இலகுசக னீரெட்டு நூற்றுநாற் பத்தேழி னிற்கரங் கும்ப மிருபத்
> தேழிரே வதிவெள்ளி பூர்வபக் கத்துதிகை யேர்க்கவுல வஞ்சப் பிரம்
> கலவி யுறுசுபதினங் கன்னிலக் கினமதிற் கலைசைப் பதிக்குள் வாழ்செங்
> கழுநீர் விநாயகர்த மீதுபிள் ளைத்தமிழ்க் கவிபாடி வாஞ்ஞெருண
> அலைமலிக டற்கடைந் தமிழ்தூட்டு மாலென்ன வவனியிற் புலவர் செவியா
> ஆர்ந்திடத் துறைசைவாழ் சிவஞான தேசிக னரங்கேற்றி ஞற தலால் (ல்
> நலசுகுண மணிகுவளை யணிபுயன் வீரப்ப னல்குமக ராச யோகன்
> நங்கள்கே சவபூப னநுசர்சேய் சுற்றமு நன்மைதரு வாழ்வு றுகவே.

The Swamigal passed away peacefully while in Tiruvavaduthurai Mutt in the month of Chitrai (April-May) in the year Visvavasu corresponding to 1785, A. D. His departure from this world is recorded in the following stanza:—

மன்னும் விசுவா வசுவருட மேடமதி
யுன்னிரவி நாட்பகலோ தாயிலியம்-பன்னுந்
திருவாள னெங்கோன் சிவஞான தேவன்
திருமேனி நீங்கு தினம்.

From these it may safely be presumed that the sage was born in the early years of the 18th. century and lived not less than 70 years or so. A few of our Swamigal's contemporaries in the Tamil India are the famous Saint Thaiyumanavar, Arunachala Kavirayar of Shiyali (the celebrated author of Rama natakam), Vadamalai Pillayan of Tinnevelly, (the Translator of Macha Purana), and Padikasu Pulavar of Ramnad; there is nothing to show that our Swamigal met or had any communication with any of these. In honour of our Swamigal a statue has been erected and deified in a small Temple specially consecrated in Vikramasingapuram (his birth place) the ver place where his parents have lived, by Subramaniya Desikar who was one of the cultured Head of the Tiruvavaduthurai Mutt. Saivagnana Swamigal had a large number of disciples of whom the famous were:-

1. Kachiappa Munivar of Tirutanikai, author of Puranams.
2. Chidambranatha Munivar, The grammarian.
3. Chidambra Munivar of Conjeevaram.
4. Muthukumaraswami Desikar of do.
5. Saravana Desikar of do.
6. Subramania Munivar of Tottikalai.
7. Somasundaram Pillai of Ramanathapuram.
8. Chandrasekara Mudaliar of Tirumukkudal.
9. Kalyanasundra Upathiyayar of Kadambarkoil.
10. Adaikalamkatha Mudaliar of Kavandandala.
11. Velayudha Desikar of Madura Authinam.
12. Tiruchittambala Desikar, Tiruvavaduthurai.

As a Poet, our Swamigal's poems are highly appreciated for their elegant diction metre and ideas. His similes are occasionally taken from his philosophy and they are always happy. He has composed two works of 'பிள்ளைத்தமிழ்' which is a difficult species of poem to excel in. In the elegance of expression and embodiment of thought his works of "பிள்ளைத்தமிழ்" are exemplary works of that series. Marvellous powers of combining words so as to give different meanings are exhibited apparently without much effort. His "கம்பரந்தாதி" deserves great attention.

It is said that our Swamigal used to compose verses in great rapidity. On one occasion an assembly of Pandits who gathered in a Siva Temple at Thirupadiripuliyur attempting to issue a prize of 100 (பொன்) gold coins placed before them in a parcel for suitably completing the first three lines of a quartrain of which the last line was:-

'களையேற விட்டமுதல் வாவுன்னை யன்றியுமோர் கதியுண் டாமோ'.

Sivagnana Swamigal who entered the Temple for worship enquired of the purpose of the gathering and on being appraised of it, is said to have immediately completed the verse in a masterly manner.

வளையேற விட்டமுதஞ் சேந்தனிட வருந்தினை வல்லினமென் றூவு
முளையேற விட்டமுத லாகுமோ வெனைச்சித்தெதன் றுளைக்கி லென்று
ஞளையேற விட்டமுத ஞளவனுக் கொண்டுநறும் புலிசை மேவுங்
களையேற விட்டமுதல் வாவுன்னை யன்றியுமோர் கதியுண் டாமோ.

Our Swamigal befitting a sage like unto himself is said to have ordered a poor Brahmin who was waiting on him for help to take the whole prize away thus showing that the Swamigal had a heart too as large as his head. The Poet's extraordinary powers of rhythmical composition and imagery of thought are specially clear in Kanji Puranam, a work which stands for all time a monument of Tamil Literature for the student of இலக்கணம் and இலக்கியம். The following stanzas are typical and are quoted for their similes:—

பாரிடங் குழித்துவீழும் பல்வயி னருவி யெல்லா
மோரிரும் பாலியாற்றி னொருங்குசென் றணையுந் தோற்றம்
சீரிய புவனந்தோறும் சிதறிய வினைக ளெல்லா
மோரிடத் தொருவன் றன்பா லுடங்குசென் றுறுதல் போலும்.

விலகிவீ ழருவித்தாரை வேறுவே றுகவோடிக்
குலநதிப் பாலிவைப்பி லேகமாய்க் கூடுந்தோற்றம்
அலகில்பல் வழியுமூ தா ரணிமையி னொன்றுமாறும்
பலபலமதமு மீற்றி னொருவழிப் படலும்போலும்.

As a Grammarian, as already stated, he was the foremost of his age. In his "தொல்காப்பியசூத்திர விருத்தி" he impresses the idea that a knowledge of Sanskrit is essential for the understanding of the real meaning of the original. As far as he himself was concerned, it is clear from his writings he was well acquainted with Panini Grammar. As a critic he was generally of a tolerant spirit. "குணநாடிக் குற்றமுநாடி யவற்றுண், மிகைநாடி மிக்ககொளல்". The spirit embodied in this couplet of THIRUVALLUVAR had been, it appears, the spirit of our sage. In addition to "தொல்காப்பியசூத்திர விருத்தி" our author has also written a catechism called "இலக்கண விளக்கச்சூறாவளி" a refutation of the "இலக்கண விளக்கம்" of Vaidia Natha Desikar.

As a controversialist also, our Swamigal was great in his time. The comprehensive knowledge of grammar and logic which the Swamigal possessed helped him to become a great controversialist of his age. His work "சிவசமவாத உரைமறுப்பு" was a counterblast issued by our Swamigal against the annotation to "Sivagnana Siddhiyar" of Arulnandi Sivachariar by Gnanapirakasamunivar. On one occasion when our Swamigal was in Conjeevaram and when the pupils of Gnanapirakasa Munivar asked our Swamigal to give the meaning of the word "எடுத்து" in "என்னைப்யிப்பவத்திற் சேராவகையெடுத் தென்சித்தத்தே தன்னைவைத்து" in Sivagnana Siddhiyar, a great controversy followed and the writings of our Swamigal in connection with that contoversy is known as "எடுத்து என்னுஞ்சொல்லுக்கிட்ட வைரக்குப்பாயம்". On another occasion he challenged the obstinacy

of the learned Vaishnavas of Conjeevaram in their dogmatism that the "Ramayanam of Kambar" was the most excellent work in Tamil. He pointed out a large number of mistakes in the very first stanza of that famous work, viz., "நாடிய பொருள் கைகூடும்." His opponents not being able to give any reply, our Swamigal himself then satisfied them by giving explanations to these objections. The discourse exhibits great erudition and is known as "கம்பராமாயண முதற்செய்யுள் சங்கோத்தர விருத்தி".

As a commentator, our Swamigal's greatness is undisputed. His greatness in that branch was also due to his scholarship in Sanskrit combined with his extraordinary proficiency in Tamil grammar and in the Tharka Sastra. It is observable that unlike the commentaries on "திருவாய்மொழி" which are full of Sanskrit technicalities and the "பரிபாஷை" of the clergy and which are on that account not easily appreciable by a student versed in Tamil, the Bashyam of our Swamigal is written in chaste Tamil. Sanskrit words have been used only when unavoidable. Our Sawmigal has written commentaries to Sivagnana Botham, Sivagnana Siddhiar etc. The Dravida Mahabashyam – our Swamigal's commentary to the Sivagnana Botham of Meikandar – is the supreme work of our Saint which will stand as a monument to the posterity in the field of Tamil Language and Saiva Siddhantam. There have been several commentaries for Sivagnana Botham. But there is no comparison between other commentaries and our Swamigal's Bashyam. Sivagnana Botham is a treatise of Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy. It consists of 12 Sutrams with Varthika Pozhipurai of Meikandar. Our Swamigal wrote two commentaries one brief, "சிற்றுரை" and the other elaborate. "திராவிடமாபாடியம்". The whole of Mahabashyam has not yet come to print. Sutrams Nos. 1 and 6 to 12 have been printed. Our Swamigal has written "Pozhippurai" with detailed grammatical notes for Sivagnana Siddhyar also. Several others have written commentaries for the above work but none of them comes up to the

level of our Swamigal's. The public at large do not have full opportunity of estimating the grandeur of the Dravida Maha Bhashiyam without the whole work being printed. The present Mahasannidhanam of Tiruvavaduthurai Mutt will, it is hoped, for the benefit of the world, bring to light the whole of the Bashyam which is to be for ever the pride of our Thiruvavaduthurai Adhinam. The Bashyam shows the originality of our Swamigal. The arguments propounded therein are very interesting indeed. Our Swamigal has brought a healthy independence of thought and a clear and keen discernment of the intellect to bear on all his discussions. He has no favourites in the range of philosophy. He attacks his opponents in the field of thought whenever he observes any fallacies and has not spared even the ancient writers held traditionally in high public veneration. Following the famous Sanskrit commentaries on the Vedanta Sutras, our Swamigal has briefly defined the tenets of each Religion and Philosophy. He holds that the Vedas and Agamas contain the spiritual nourishment to men of different grades of advancement and that what has been ordained in respect of one stage should not be criticised from the aspect of another.

Our Swamigal is said to have composed some Sanskrit Slokas of rare merit. But these are not available to the public. There is much more to be explored about our Swamigal's life and works. If some earnest workers will exert themselves and if our present Mahasannidanam of Thiruvavaduthurai Mutt will also come forward to help the cause, it is possible the world will be benefitted to a great extent by bringing to light more things about the life and thoughts of our Swamigal. It is hoped that our high talented and broad minded present Mahasannidanam of our ancient Thiruvavaduthurai Audhinam-Sri La Sri. Ambalavana Desikar-will come forward and do the needfull in this great cause.

THE END.

சுலோகபஞ்சக மொழிபெயர்ப்பு.

1. உயர்காயத்திரிக் குரிப்பொருளாக்லிற்,
2. றசரதன்மதலை தாபித்தேத்தலிற்,
3. கண்ணன்கயிலையி னண்ணிநின் றிரப்பப்
புகழ்ச்சியினமைந்த மகப்பே றுதவலிற்,
4. றனுதவிழியுட னொராயிரங்கமலப்
புதுமலர்கொண்டரி பூசனையாற்றலின்,
5. ஆங்கவற்கிரங்கி யாழியீந்தருடலின்,
6. ஐங்கணைக்கிழவனை யழல்விருந்தாக்கலின்,
7. அமைப்பருங்கடுவிட மமுதுசெய்திடுதலிற்,
8. றென்றிசைத்தலைவனைச் செகுத்துயிர்பருகலின்,
9. அவுணர்முப்புர மழியவில்வாங்கலிற்,
10. றக்கன்வேள்வி தகர்த்தருள்செய்தலிற்,
11. றனஞ்சயன்றனக்குத் தன்படைவழங்கலின்,
12. மாநுடமடங்கலை வலிதபக்கோறலின்,
13. மாயோன்மகடூஉ வாகியகாலைத்
தடமுலைதிளைத்துச் சாத்தனைத்தருதலின்,
14. ஆழ்கடல்வரைப்பி னான்றோரநேகர்
அன்புமீதூர வருச்சனையாற்றலின்,
15. நான்கிருசெல்வமு மாங்கவர்க்கருடலின்,
16 ஐயிருபிறப்பினு மரியருச்சித்தலின்,
17. இருவருமன்னமு மேனமுமாகி
அடிமுடிதேட வழற்பிழம்பாகலிற்,
18. பிறப்பிறப்பாதி யுயிர்க்குணமின்மையிற்,
19. கங்கைசூழ்கிடந்த காசிமால்வரைப்பிற்
பொய்புகல்வியாதன் கைதம்பித்தலின்
20 முப்புரமிறுப்புழி முகுந்தப்புத்தேள்
மால்விடையாகி ஞாலமொடுதாங்கலின்,
21. அயன்சிரமாலை யளவிலவணிதலின்,
22. ஞானமும்வீடும் பேணினர்க்குதவலிற்
பசுபதிப்பெயரிய தனிமுதற்கடவுள்
உம்பர்களெவர்க்கு முயர்ந்தோன்
என்பதுமிதெளிக வியல்புணர்ந்தோரே.